

OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ
ETAPA LOCALĂ - 28 FEBRUARIE 2026
CLASA a VII-a

VARIANTA 1

Nota: Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Timp de lucru: 2 ore. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu.

SUBIECTUL I

Read the text and choose the correct answer:

(5 X 5p = 25 points)

Looking back on things now, perhaps my being a 'van-vendor' or a mobile canteen owner was meant to be. I've pretty much always been on the road. My father's work involved moving around a lot, so by the time I was fifteen, I had been to six different schools! When I was at college studying Hospitality, I began to work part-time for a programme called 'Meals on Wheels'.

I was a volunteer who drove a van stocked with prepared food. I handed out the food to various elderly or ill people who couldn't prepare meals for themselves. The meals were really good. All well prepared, with hygiene and nutrition taking priority, and people even had choices of vegetarian, diabetic or particular types of ethnic cuisine.

I had to stop working there when I got a full-time job for a catering business. I learnt many tricks of the food trade there as well, but my goal was to become my own boss. I didn't have enough money to open a restaurant though, and I was still young and unsure of exactly what I wanted to do.

A trip to Japan was the inspiration for my current mobile food business. I loved trying the variety of foods at the 'yatai' or street stalls. One of the owners told me that 'yatai' actually means 'a cart with a roof', and I even saw some of these traditional food pushcarts being towed around. What I also saw were the modern equivalents, large vans that had been converted into mobile kitchens with a large serving window in their side. Customers would line up by the dozens to buy their range of offerings.

When I came back home, that was it - I finally knew exactly what I was going to do. I bought an old van, got it customized by a carpenter friend of mine and then by a plumber. My van ended up with benches, cupboards, a microwave, fridge and sink and a huge sign proudly sporting 'Fred's Food to You'. I applied to the council for the relevant permits and in no time my business was up and running!

I visit large companies and factories from early morning through to the afternoon selling sandwiches, fish and chips, cakes and more. I don't even advertise, as 'word of mouth' has my business flourishing. At night, I double up as a burger and pie stand in front of clubs. I open when I please and close when I want. My customers know me by name and I know most of them. Good food and service, that's what people want and that's what I'm about.

1. What is the writer's main purpose for writing the article?

- A To talk about his travels in Asia.
- B To explain how he got a college diploma.
- C To explain how he got into the food trade.
- D To advertise the services of his carpenter friend.

2. What was Fred's goal?

- A To work independently.
- B To learn more about preparing food.
- C To have a good employer.
- D To own a restaurant and make money.

3. What does the reader learn about Fred from the article?

- A He would like to own a street stall.
- B He wants to travel again.
- C He prefers to work night shift.
- D He is proud of his business.

4. How did he put his business ideas into practice?

- A With money loaned by his friends.
- B Through purchasing and renovating a van.
- C By enrolling in a cooking course.
- D By redesigning his kitchen.

5. What helped Fred's business become successful?

- A Expensive advertising campaigns.
- B Support from large restaurants.
- C Recommendations from satisfied customers.
- D Selling only traditional Japanese food.

SUBIECTUL II

Use the words in capitals to form words that fit in the blank spaces:

(10 X 1p = 10 points)

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| 1. His greatest | was his ability to stay calm even in the most difficult situations. | STRONG |
| 2. People should never underestimate the | of regular exercise. | IMPORTANT |
| 3., | we arrived at the station just as the train was leaving and missed it. | FORTUNE |
| 4. Their | ended up in violence. | AGREE |
| 5. It was a dark, | night and I was very scared. | STORM |
| 6. It was very | of you to trust him after he had lied to you so many times before. | FOOL |
| 7. As John walked through the | , he stumbled and fell. | DARK |
| 8. I think it's | clever of you to make your own clothes. | WONDER |
| 9. The young musician performed with such talent that he won everyone's | | ADMIRE |
| 10. The swans looked | as they glided across the lake. | GRACE |

SUBIECTUL III

Put the verbs in brackets in the right tense.

(10 X 2p = 20 points)

- 1. In the series, Sadie Sink (play) Max Mayfield, a brave and independent teenager.
- 2. By the time the police arrived, Eleven (find) a safe place to hide.
- 3. We are exhausted! We (play) Dungeons & Dragons all night.
- 4. The boys (ride) their bikes through the dark streets of Hawkins when Will disappeared.
- 5. This time next week, fans all over the world (watch) the *Stranger Things* finale.
- 6. We (receive) many e-mails this morning and it's only 10 o'clock!
- 7. The traffic in the city centre (become) worse and worse.
- 8. They (only/stay) in a five-star hotel once before.
- 9. Tell me your opinion as soon as you (have) all the information.
- 10. I (take) my history exam again tomorrow morning at 9:00.

SUBIECTUL IV

Read the text below and choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for each space.

(10 X 1p = 10 points)

Modern cinema audiences (1) to see plenty of thrilling scenes in action films. These scenes, which are known (2) stunts are usually performed by stuntmen who are specially trained to do dangerous things safely. (3) can crash a car, but if you're shooting a film, you have to be extremely (4), sometimes stopping right in front of the camera and film crew. At an early (5) in the production, an expert stuntman is (6) in to work out the action scenes and form a team. He is the only person who can go against the wishes of the director, (7) he will usually only do this for safety reasons.

Many famous actors like to do the dangerous parts themselves, (8) produces better shots, since stuntmen don't have to stand in for the actors. Actors like to become involved (9) all the important aspects of the character they are playing, but without the recent progress in safety equipment, insurance companies would never (10) them take the risk. To do their own stunts, actors need to be good athletes, but they must also be sensible and know their limits. If they were to be hurt, the film would come to a sudden halt.

- | | | | |
|--------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| 1 A expect | B count | C claim | D prepare |
| 2 A for | B by | C as | D like |
| 3 A Everyone | B Anyone | C Someone | D No one |
| 4 A detailed | B plain | C straight | D precise |
| 5 A period | B minute | C part | D stage |
| 6 A led | B taken | C drawn | D called |
| 7 A despite | B so | C although | D otherwise |
| 8 A that | B which | C who | D what |
| 9 A in | B at | C into | D at |
| 10 A allow | B let | C permit | D admit |

SUBIECTUL V

Write a story which begins with the following words:

“Race you to the abandoned ranger’s cabin at the end of the forest path,” Riley said confidently, pushing his bike helmet back as the sun turned red behind the pine-covered hills.” Give your story a suitable title.

Write your story in about 150 words.

(25 points)

OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ
ETAPA LOCALĂ - 28 FEBRUARIE 2026
CLASA a VIII - a

VARIANTA 1

Notă: Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Timp de lucru 2 ore. Se acorda 10 puncte din oficiu.

SUBIECTUL I

Read the text and choose the correct answer.

(5 X 5p = 25 points)

The Rise of Urban Gardening

In recent years, urban gardening has gained tremendous popularity in cities worldwide. Apartment dwellers and people without large gardens are finding inventive ways to cultivate fruits, vegetables and even herbs. Rooftops, balconies and small indoor spaces are increasingly being transformed into green oases. Urban gardening is not just about growing food—it also fosters stronger communities and promotes wellbeing.

One main reason for this trend is the desire for fresh, chemical-free produce. Many city residents worry about pesticides and the environmental cost of transporting supermarket goods. By growing their own food, they can ensure freshness and quality. Gardening also encourages consumption of seasonal vegetables, which are often tastier and more nutritious.

The environmental benefits are significant. Plants absorb carbon dioxide, release oxygen and help mitigate the “urban heat island” effect, where city areas become hotter than their surroundings. Local production reduces the need for transportation, lowering fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Socially, community gardens connect neighbours from diverse backgrounds. People exchange advice, tools and experiences, creating a sense of belonging. Schools increasingly use gardening programs to teach children responsibility, teamwork and respect for nature.

Despite the advantages, urban gardening faces obstacles. Limited sunlight, space restrictions and municipal regulations can complicate efforts. However, innovative solutions such as vertical gardens, hydroponics and container planting are helping to overcome these challenges. As urban areas continue to grow, gardening may play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable, livable cities.

1. Why are city residents increasingly interested in urban gardening?

- A. To compete with farmers
- B. To sell homegrown food
- C. To ensure fresh and chemical-free produce
- D. Because imported products are expensive

2. What is meant by the “urban heat island” effect?

- A. Cities with more islands than rural areas
- B. Higher temperatures in cities compared to surrounding regions
- C. Heat generated only by factories
- D. More public parks in cities

3. How do community gardens influence social life?
- A. They promote cooperation and knowledge-sharing
 - B. They encourage independent work only
 - C. They replace school programs
 - D. They create divisions among neighbors
4. Which solutions are mentioned for overcoming urban gardening challenges?
- A. Moving gardens to rural areas
 - B. Importing vegetables from abroad
 - C. Limiting city population
 - D. Using vertical gardens and hydroponics
5. Which statement best summarizes the last paragraph?
- A. Urban gardening is a short-term trend.
 - B. Its benefits outweigh its obstacles, especially with new technologies.
 - C. Only wealthy neighborhoods can benefit.
 - D. Gardening has more social than environmental impact.

SUBIECTUL II

Read the text below and decide which answer best fits each gap.

(10 X 2p = 20 points)

Last weekend, I went on a short trip to the countryside to escape the hustle and bustle of the city. The scenery was absolutely 1. _____, with rolling hills and clear rivers stretching as far as the eye could see. I decided to take a long walk along a trail that was marked on the map, but soon I realised that I had underestimated the 2. _____ of the hike. It turned out to be much steeper than I expected and I had to stop several times to catch my 3. _____ .

Despite the physical challenge, I felt a strong sense of 4. _____ as I reached the top and looked at the view. Nature has a way of making us appreciate the 5. _____ moments in life. On the way back, I noticed a small café near the village, which seemed very 6. _____ to tourists. I went inside and ordered a hot drink. The café owner was incredibly 7. _____ and shared interesting stories about the local traditions.

By the end of the day, I realized that this trip had been more than just a physical journey—it was also an opportunity to 8. _____ my perspective on life. Sometimes, stepping away from the usual routine can help you feel more curious and 9. _____. I left feeling inspired and determined to make a few positive 10. _____ in my daily habits.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. A tedious | B polluted | C breathtaking | D ordinary |
| 2. A ease | B difficulty | C simplicity | D laziness |
| 3. A courage | B energy | C breath | D pace |
| 4. A disappointment | B satisfaction | C anxiety | D confusion |
| 5. A meaningful | B useless | C trivial | D insignificant |

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 6. A unfamiliar | B welcoming | C dangerous | D irrelevant |
| 7. A impatient | B rude | C indifferent | D hospitable |
| 8. A narrow | B broaden | C ignore | D complicate |
| 9. A stressed | B careless | C tense | D open-minded |
| 10. A improvements | B mistakes | C challenges | D regrets |

SUBIECTUL III

Use the word given in capitals at the end of the sentence to form a word that fits in the gap. (5 X 2p = 10 points)

1. The witness gave a completely inconsistent statement, which made the jury doubt his _____. (CREDIBLE)
2. She gave an _____ presentation that failed to capture the audience's attention. (INTEREST)
3. The government announced new measures to tackle the difficult matter of youth _____. (EMPLOY)
4. During his _____ from the town, everything seemed to have changed. (ABSENT)
5. She handled the negotiation with great _____ and diplomacy. (CONFIDENT)

SUBIECTUL IV

Rewrite these sentences correctly. (10 points)

1. It is three weeks since Ann has bought that large red SUV.
2. She read the book silent and didn't notice me entering the room.
3. He says the guests will have left by the time you will get there.
4. I'm looking forward to see you at the party next week.
5. I prefer reading books than watching movies in my free time.

SUBIECTUL V

In 150 – 180 words, write a story ending with the following sentence: *"Then I realised why my so-called best buddy had been ridiculing everything I did—and with that bitter understanding, I knew our friendship was over."* Give your story a suitable title.

(25 points)

OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ - ETAPA LOCALĂ
28.02.2026
CLASA a IX-a, SECȚIUNEA A

VARIANTA 1

Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A - USE OF ENGLISH 40 points.

I. Put the verbs in brackets into the correct form to complete the letter below: (10x 1 p=10 points)

A night out

1 (you ever feel) that birthdays were more fun when you were a kid?

I certainly 2 (do) on my 18th birthday as I 3 (sit) at home and watched TV. Sure, people 4 (give) me nice presents, but somehow the old excitement 5 (miss). Then, to my surprise, the doorbell 6 (ring).

The moment I 7 (open) the door and 8 (see) my friends standing there my mood changed. "We 9 (take) you downtown!", they said, laughing. You can imagine how delighted I was!

I quickly got ready and I knew it 10 (be) a great evening!

II. Use the word given in capital letters to form a word that fits in each space: (10 x 1 p= 10 points)

Teleworking

An (0) ...increasing... number of people nowadays are choosing to work from the (1) environment of their own homes rather than undergo the (2) process of travelling to work every day. The emergence of teleworking, as it is commonly called, is due to the (3) use of computers in the workplace. Working conditions at home are more relaxed and can actually be timed to suit oneself. There is no (4) need to get to the office on time, no (5) caused by the rush-hour traffic as with (6), and it isn't necessary to face (7) colleagues on a (8) basis. However, there is a negative side. For example, some people might suffer from (9) if they spend all day at home, or they might feel the (10) to spend time doing other jobs around the house.

0. INCREASE; 1. COMFORT; 2. TROUBLE; 3. EXTEND; 4. STRESS; 5. FRUSTRATE; 6. COMMUTE; 7. PLEASANT; 8. DAY

9. BORE; 10. TEMPT.

III. Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space. Use only *one word* in each space. (10 x 1 p=10 points)

There has been no space for new buildings in Central London (1) many years now. In fact, this was a problem that city planners had to (2) with as long as 19th century. They decided that the only way (3) expand was to go down. So they dug. Recent construction work in the heart of London has uncovered a lot of London's underground past. Workers found a hidden world (4) Roman times.

On (5) recent development, construction workers unearthed the old High Street of Roman London, (6) follows exactly the line of today's main roads in the City of London. There are even secrets (7) the River Thames, which has around 30 tunnels beneath. The first of these (8) built by Marc Brunel back in the 1800s. It was (9) difficult job, and it took (10) and his men 15 years to finish.

IV. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Use the word given in brackets.

You must use between two and five words. Do not change the word given. (5 x 2 p= 10 points)

1. They cannot do all that work in a single day. (**capable**)

They all that work in a single day.

2. How long has she been a chef? (**become**)

- When chef?
3. You won't be forced to buy anything there. (**make**)
Nobody..... anything there.
 4. Unfortunately, Tim can't be a pilot because of his eyesight. (**were**)
If Tim's eyesight a pilot.
 5. The actors have never met before. (**seen**)
The actors before.

SUBIECTUL B - INTEGRATED SKILLS 50 points

I. Read the text below. For questions 1 to 5, choose the correct answer A, B, C or D. (5 x 1 p= 5 points)

Active Villagers

Residents of a small Welsh-speaking community in the UK have clubbed together to buy the post office and shop, ten years after buying the café. The people of Llithfaen were determined to prevent their village losing its focal point. Ten years ago they paid £40,000 for the café, called the Victoria, and now they have helped to keep the shop open. Most of the cost, £19,500, was met by the local council and a European Union grant, but the villagers needed to raise a further £6,000 to buy the shop from the owner who is retiring.

John Jones, chairman of the community committee, said: "We went around every house and came back with £500 more than we needed. The post office and the café are essential to the life of the village. There are no other amenities. We were not prepared to stand by and let the heart and soul be ripped out of our community. No one else was going to help us so we decided to buy them ourselves." Llithfaen had a population of 600 but that halved when nearby granite quarries were closed. The primary school was shut because of the population decline but the locals turned it into a leisure centre and youth club.

The shop has been leased to Ffion Medi Llywelyn, 24, who lives in the village with her husband, Dillon. She said: "There is a wonderful community spirit here." The couple plan to modernize the shop and extend its range of goods to attract both residents and visitors from nearby towns. They also hope to sell locally produced crafts and organic food, supporting small-scale Welsh producers. Ffion believes that by combining traditional rural values with modern services, the shop can become not only a business but a symbol of hope and resilience for the people of Llithfaen.

Over the past decade, Llithfaen has become an example of how small communities can survive despite economic decline. When larger towns attract businesses and young families, many rural areas struggle to keep their shops and public spaces open. Yet Llithfaen's villagers have shown that cooperation and determination can keep local life thriving. Thanks to their effort, the post office, café, and leisure centre now provide vital meeting points, especially for elderly residents and children, helping prevent isolation and preserving the Welsh language in everyday life.

The success of Llithfaen's community initiatives has inspired other villages in Wales to take similar action. Local councillors say that community ownership projects like this one foster pride and self-reliance. For Llithfaen, what started as a small attempt to save a café has grown into a movement that keeps the village's identity alive, proving that even in the smallest corners of the country, collective effort can make a lasting difference.

1. Why did the villagers decide to buy the post office and the shop?
 - A) They wanted to turn it into a museum.
 - B) They feared losing the heart of their community.
 - C) They were encouraged by the EU to do so.
 - D) The previous owner gave it to them for free.

2. How much money did the villagers themselves need to raise to buy the shop?
 - A) £19,500
 - B) £40,000
 - C) £6,000
 - D) £500

3. What did the villagers turn the closed primary school into?

- A) A small factory
- B) A library
- C) A leisure centre and youth club
- D) A restaurant

4. What is Ffion Medi Llywelyn planning to do with the shop?

- A) Sell it to a chain supermarket
- B) Close it to focus on her family
- C) Transform it into a postal museum
- D) Modernize it and support local producers

5. What overall message does the story of Llithfaen convey?

- A) Community cooperation can preserve local identity.
- B) Economic decline is inevitable for small villages.
- C) Only government funding can save rural life.
- D) Villagers should move to larger towns for better opportunities.

- II. You have just read the newspaper article above and you are impressed by the initiative of the villagers in Llithfaen, Wales. Next, they are looking for help with an advertising campaign over social media to promote their shop and local products so that more visitors come to the village.**

Communication specialist needed

The Active Villagers are looking for a communication specialist over social media networks to design a campaign to promote our village and initiative with the shop and local products. We are looking for serious, friendly, respectful students, with good language command, digital skills and a creative spark. We need students to contribute in designing the campaign, promote our village shop and local products over social media and keep in touch with people who show interest in us.

If you consider yourself suitable for the position, apply now!

Write your letter of application. (120-180 words)

(45 points)

OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ – ETAPA LOCALĂ
28 FEBRUARIE 2026
CLASA a X-a - SECȚIUNEA A

VARIANTA 1

NOTĂ:

Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A - USE OF ENGLISH **40 points**

I. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and six words, including the word given.

(5 X 2p = 10 p)

1. Alice found it hard to settle down to a new life in France.

DIFFICULTY

Aliceto a new life in France.

2. Patients rarely make a full recovery from this disease.

CASES

In very a full recovery from this disease.

3. But for the referee's prompt intervention, a fire would have developed on the pitch.

NOT

If, a fire would have developed on the pitch.

4. "Is it possible he paid someone to burgle his house?" wondered the insurance investigator.

BURGLER

"Is it possible.....?" wondered the insurance investigator.

5. "How long have you been standing here?" she said to me.

I
She asked me..... standing there.

II. Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D. (10 X 1p = 10p)

Eat breakfast and lose weight

Eating breakfast helps teenagers lose weight, a survey of eating habits in the United States has found. The study showed that those who have a (1)_____ meal at breakfast time - and therefore end up with a higher (2)_____ intake - are more likely to be within a healthy weight range than those who (3)_____ the first meal of the day.

Although it may seem hard to swallow, the people who ate more did more (4)_____ activity during the day, and that may be because they didn't feel so (5)_____. Dr Pereira, who led the research, said that even cooked breakfasts were better than missing out on food altogether. 'While it's best to go for a healthy option - a wholegrain cereal for instance - the evidence does (6)_____ that eating anything is better than eating nothing.'

Other studies have also shown that those who eat breakfast are less likely to feel (7)_____ mid-morning and snack on high-fat foods before lunch. They therefore have a more (8)_____ diet.

Dr Pereira said: 'This study clearly supports what other studies have shown: kids who don't eat breakfast tend to (9)_____ on more weight.' This obviously has a (10)_____ effect on their long-term health. Missing breakfast is a common approach to dieting, particularly among teenage girls, but they would do well to heed advice and develop a taste for breakfast.

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 | A whole | B round | C square | D main |
| 2 | A nutrients | B calorie | C ingredient | D nourishment |
| 3 | A skip | B leap | C step | D jump |
| 4 | A vitalising | B invigorating | C brisk | D refreshing |
| 5 | A immobile | B inoperative | C lethargic | D redundant |
| 6 | A offer | B propose | C persuade | D suggest |
| 7 | A parched | B allergic | C peckish | D fussy |

| | | | | |
|----|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 8 | A beneficial | B nutritious | C healthful | D energetic |
| 9 | A put | B get | C carry | D take |
| 10 | A hurtful | B detrimental | C unfavourable | D disadvantageous |

III. Write ONE word in each gap. (10 X 1p = 10p)

Traditionally, post offices have been treated as poor relations by governments everywhere. The business of carrying mail and dispensing other government-related services (such as driving licences and state pensions) has suffered, while the far (1)_____ glamorous telecommunications services have been favoured (2)_____ investment to keep them abreast of modern trends. Now, not before time, things are changing. Post offices throughout Europe are being transformed from off-putting, government-style institutions into (3)_____ a lot more cheery and efficient. Post offices are (4)_____ pressure from a number of directions. Firstly, governments are increasingly trying to off-load the headache of managing postal organisations. That's why most of Europe's post offices are now semi-independent operations run (5)_____ business principles. They retain some of their privileges but have lost many of their lucrative rights. (6)_____ post office counter networks are going to survive, then much will depend on (7)_____ the managers can make the best use of their presence in the High Street. They will need a (8)_____ eye for what services sell best, and in what type of atmosphere. Modern technology will be indispensable in accomplishing the task of updating the old institutions. Computers will be used to (9)_____ queues by automating routine transactions, and will help hard-pressed staff by simplifying postal duties, (10)_____ get more complex by the day.

IV. Write the correct form of the word in CAPITALS to complete the gaps: (10 X 1p = 10 p)

Having experienced an (1)_____ hospitable welcome at the last Olympics and talked to thousands of happy (2)_____ who attended them, I am even more (3)_____ about this wonderful event. This is one of the few occasions when the whole of (4)_____ comes together, displaying a unity that is all too rare in today's world. Where (5)_____ fail, athletes appear to succeed. The (6)_____ themselves, thrilling, spectacular and emotional, are the ultimate test of human (7)_____. They are not only a test of speed, skill and (8)_____, but also a measure of the competitors' courage and (9)_____. For the thousands present, and for the millions watching on TV, the Olympics are the most (10)_____ show on earth.

| | | | |
|----|----------|-----|-----------|
| 1. | AMAZE | 6. | COMPETE |
| 2. | VISIT | 7. | ACHIEVE |
| 3. | ENTHUSE | 8. | STRONG |
| 4. | HUMAN | 9. | ENDURE |
| 5. | POLITICS | 10. | FASCINATE |

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow. (5 X 1p = 5 points)

A Bike Ride

The Netherlands is home to over 18 million bicycles. This is a staggering number when you consider that the population is only 16.5 million people. About 84 percent of the Dutch own a bike, which works out to about 1.3 bikes per active cyclist. The country has close to 35,000 km or 22,000 miles of cycling infrastructure, which in a country the size of a peanut - or more precisely, the size of Maryland - is quite a lot.

I am a Canadian girl who used to drive everywhere, had her license when she was 16 and a day, and managed to put more mileage on her parents' car before she turned 20 than in the following 20 years. Now I live just outside of Amsterdam and own four of those 18 million bicycles.

I have a bike for the city, which I leave parked by the bus stop so that I can get around Amsterdam. I have a regular bike here at home that I use for quick zips around town. There's a cargo bike for family outings. And I still use my old L.L. Bean cycle, purchased over 20 years ago, for the occasional long-distance ride.

I've never tallied up my total kilometers biked over the last 15 years, but a rough calculation has me nearing 30,000 km. That's like biking across Canada six times - and I've driven it only once.

My cargo bike is built for six. It seats four children in the front, one on the back, and me. If it's not full of kids, it's full of groceries, school bags, other bikes, beehives - my husband's hobby - and the occasional borrowed chair or table for

a party. Every day, I get up, have breakfast, and take my kids to school and head to work on this bike - every day, rain or shine, snow or sleet, wind or wind. There is a lot of wind where I live.

I was working in Amsterdam when I met my husband, who is Dutch. I've stayed, however, not only because of the marriage or the weather or the drug laws. It's the biking and the lifestyle that comes with it. Before living here, I biked around the block as a tyke, and occasionally to school. Now I have the Dutch mindset: use a bike where you can, when you can. I never think about using the car. Rather, I think about which of my four bikes I need to pull out.

The Dutch government has made it easy by providing the infrastructure needed for safe and efficient cycling. Creating bike paths and lanes is important, but a lot of other components make it into an ecosystem: bike signage, bike traffic lights, bike repair shops, bike-purchase tax breaks, and bike right of way, as well as a well-designed bike parking system.

This is further enhanced by the diversity of types of bikes and the accessories designed for them. Some bikes, like my cargo one, carry kids and groceries. There are clip-ons for baby buggies or dog leashes, and crates in the front and bags on the back for extra carrying space. Add some good old-fashioned tie wraps on the tires in the winter, and you're ready for biking in the snow.

There are taxi bikes, foldable-portable bikes the size of a small suitcase for use with public transport, cargo bikes with two or three wheels, kid bikes, speed bikes, back-break bikes, and the list continues. Electric bikes are gaining market share by enabling the elderly and others to cycle while using the extra support of the bike generator. There is, quite literally, a bike for every occasion.

This becomes clear in another remarkable number: over a quarter of all trips in this country are made by bike, with up to 59 percent of them within cities. The national daily biking average is 2.6 km, and that number includes trips by kids and the elderly. Denmark follows, with a 1.6 km average, and the United States lags at 0.1 km. The percentage of the elderly still using bikes for daily trips is 24 percent, double that of Germans and Danes.

Some cities have free bikes; others work with companies that charge for use, as with car sharing. These systems place bikes or bike parking near stations or end points in their public transport infrastructure and encourage people to bike as a component of a commute, taking kids to school, or running errands.

This innovation began in Amsterdam back in 1965. The city had made free bikes available for anyone to use. Although it wasn't a huge success here, it did lay the groundwork for other cities to embrace and develop their own bike-sharing systems.

The happy lifestyle of the Dutch is well known and much envied. Biking is clearly a part of it. When I bike, I arrive at my destination already feeling good. I have avoided the stress of sitting in a traffic jam and can park anywhere. Imagine spreading those feelings around an entire population.

Sometimes it's a challenging workout, with wind, hills, rain, or a full load, so I bike a little slower. And sometimes I would rather take the car. But I don't. It's my policy: I do it for me, and I want my kids to understand that, when possible, it's better for everyone if we bike.

(The Tribune)

1 What is the writer's objective in the second paragraph?

- A She wants to highlight the difference between two divergent cultures.
- B She would like to encourage people to ride bicycles.
- C She wants to impress us with her driving record.
- D She would like to dissuade people from driving.

2 Why does the writer focus on one particular bicycle in the fifth paragraph?

- A She wants to illustrate its value on windy days.
- B She would like to demonstrate how she occasionally uses it.
- C She intends to showcase its versatility.
- D She wants to highlight its safety features when transporting children.

3 Why did the writer choose to stay in Amsterdam?

- A She became enamoured with the Dutch countryside.
- B She benefits from the relaxed drug laws.
- C The weather was agreeable to her.
- D She admires the Dutch way of living.

4 What does the writer credit for the success of the Dutch cycling system?

- A The policies and programs of the authorities make biking convenient.
- B The courteousness of Dutch drivers.
- C The strictness of the Dutch police.
- D The extensive network of security cameras.

5 Why does the writer imply that electric bicycles are increasing in popularity?

- A They are useful for all occasions.
- B Markets prefer people to share electric bikes.
- C Electric bikes are supported by industry.
- D Electric bikes are preferred by a population that is growing older.

II. You recently downloaded an app for ordering taxis through your smartphone. The company is asking its users to write a review for their website. They are keen for the reviews to cover details about the app's features, its ease of use and convenience, and how it compares to traditional taxi services or other taxi apps. Include a recommendation as to who would benefit most from the app. Write your review in 180-200 words.

(45 points)

VARIANTA 1

NOTĂ:

Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A - USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Put the verbs in brackets into a suitable tense/ form:

10x1p = 10p

If someone (1).....(tell) me a decade ago that I would be living in a remote cabin in the Arctic, I (2).....(laugh) in their face. At that time, I was a dedicated city dweller, someone who (3).....(be accustomed) to the constant hum of traffic and the neon glow of street lights.

By the time I turn forty next year, I (4).....(spend) exactly five years in this frozen wilderness. Little I (5).....(know) when I first arrived that the silence would be so deafening. Had I realised how harsh the winters were, I (6).....(not/embark) on this journey in the first place.

However, despite the isolation, I don't regret my choice. It is high time people (7).....(realise) that the pace of modern life is unsustainable. I often find myself wishing that more people (8).....(have) the courage to disconnect. Recently, I (9).....(work) on a memoir about my experiences, which I hope (10).....(publish) by the end of the winter.

II. Use the word given in capital letters to form a word that fits in each space:

10x1p=10p

The Evolution of Modern Communication

The digital revolution has (1).....altered the way we interact with one another. While some argue that technology has led to the (2).....of social bonds, others believe it has fostered a new sense of global (3).....

In the past, long-distance communication was often(4)..... and slow. However, the (5)..... of high-speed internet has made instant messaging (6)..... for both personal and professional life.

Despite the (7).....benefits of being constantly connected, there is a growing concern regarding digital fatigue.

Many people find it (8) difficult to "unplug". This constant state of (9).....to respond to notifications can lead to high levels of stress. Therefore, finding a balance is (10).....for our long-term mental well-being.

1. DRAMATIC; 2. WEAK; 3. TOGETHER; 4. RELY; 5. EMERGE; 6. DISPENSE; 7. DENY; 8. INCREASE; 9. READY; 10. CRITIC

III. Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D:

10x1p = 10p

- If he _____ more attention to the signs, he _____ lost in the middle of the city yesterday.
A) paid / wouldn't get B) had paid / wouldn't have got C) has paid / shouldn't have got D) would pay / hadn't got
- The manager suggested that the meeting _____ postponed because the report _____ yet.
A) be / hadn't been finished B) is / won't be finished C) was / hasn't finished D) being / isn't finished
- She told me that she _____ for two hours and that her feet _____ terribly.
A) is walking / hurt B) had been walking / were hurting C) has walked / have hurt D) walks/hurt
- Hardly _____ the room _____ the phone started ringing.
A) I entered / than B) had I entered/ when C) did I enter / then D) have I entered / that
- I wish I _____, to her advice yesterday; I _____ in this mess now.
A) listened / won't be B) would listen / wouldn't have been C) had listened / wouldn't be D) listen / am not
- You _____ bring an umbrella; the weather forecast said it _____ definitely be sunny.
A) mustn't / should B) needn't / would C) can't / might D) shouldn't / shall
- The scientist _____ argued that the results _____ interpreted with caution.
A) convincingly / must be B) hardly/should be C) eventually/can have been D) utterly/might have
- He is _____ person I've ever met, and he _____ speaks about himself.
A) the most selfish/seldom B) more selfish/rarely C) the selfish/ always D) selfish/ never
- We stopped _____ the map because we couldn't help _____ that we were completely lost.
A) reading /to feel B) to read /feeling C) reading / feeling D) to read / to feel

10. I've _____ to see anyone who can dance as well as Diana.
A) never B) yet C) always D) seldom

IV. Read the text below and think of one word which best fits in each gap. Use only one word in each gap: 10x1p=10p

Although the numbers of elderly and disabled people are rising, the support provided by the state has not increased. (1).....to a recent report by a leading charity, very (2).....of them are in fact cared (3).....in institutions, and the vast majority depend almost entirely (4) family and friends. This allows the elderly and disabled to (5).....a much better quality of life than they might (6).....have, and the fact that this army of workers is unpaid also (7).....that the state is relieved of a considerable burden. However, it is (8).....noting that there is a hidden cost to society on (9).....of the fact that these carers are prevented from (10).....part in any economic activity outside the home.

SUBIECTUL B- INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

- I. For each question decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits according to the text: 5x1p = 5p**

The Rise of the "Green" Urban Spaces

In the last decade, urban planning has undergone a radical transformation. Cities like Copenhagen, Singapore, and Medellin have become pioneers in integrating nature into the concrete jungle. This shift isn't merely aesthetic; it is a calculated response to the escalating climate crisis. Urban "heat islands" - areas where concrete and asphalt absorb and irradiate heat - can make cities several degrees warmer than surrounding rural areas. By planting rooftop gardens and creating "vertical forests", city planners are effectively lowering local temperatures and reducing the energy demand for air conditioning.

However, the implementation of these green initiatives is not without its critics. Some urban sociologists argue that "green gentrification" is a growing concern. As neighbourhoods become more ecologically attractive, property values skyrocket, often displacing the long-term, lower-income residents who were supposed to benefit from the improved air quality and recreational spaces. In London, for instance, the development of luxury green complexes has faced backlash for prioritising wealthy investors over community-driven parks.

Despite these social challenges, the environmental benefits are quantifiable. Beyond temperature control, urban greenery plays a crucial role in biodiversity. Native bird species and essential pollinators like bees are returning to city centres where they hadn't been seen for decades.

The success of these projects depends on a delicate balance: city councils must find a way to prioritise environmental sustainability without sacrificing social equity.

1. What is the primary reason for the recent change in urban planning mentioned in the text?
 - A. To make cities look more modern for tourists .
 - B. To counteract the effects of the climate crisis.
 - C. To increase the number of luxury housing complexes.
 - D. To follow a new trend started by urban sociologists.

2. What are "urban heat islands"?
 - A. Tropical islands that are becoming highly urbanised .
 - B. Parks that are specifically designed to trap heat.
 - C. City areas that are significantly hotter due to building materials.
 - D. Rural areas that have been turned into concrete jungles.

3. According to the text, what is a negative consequence of "green gentrification"?
 - A. A decrease in the overall air quality of the city.
 - B. The return of dangerous wild animals to urban centres .
 - C. Rising energy demands for cooling the buildings.
 - D. The forced relocation of residents due to the higher costs.

4. The example of London is used to illustrate:
- A. The world's most successful vertical forest project.
 - B. The conflict between private investment and public benefit.
 - C. A city that has successfully avoided green gentrification.
 - D. How bees and birds have improved the city's ecosystem.
5. What is the author's conclusion regarding green cities?
- A. They are a failed experiment due to social inequality.
 - B. They should focus exclusively on biodiversity, not people .
 - C. They require a strategy that balances ecology with social fairness.
 - D. They are only effective in wealthy cities like Singapore and Copenhagen.

II. You have recently participated in a local community project aimed at “greening” your neighbourhood (planting trees, creating a small community garden, or installing recycling bins). Your school magazine has asked you to write a report on the activity. You should:

- describe the main activities that were carried out
- evaluate the impact the project had on the local community
- suggest further activities that could improve the area in the future

Write your report. (220-250 words)

45 p

OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ – ETAPA LOCALĂ
28 FEBRUARIE 2026
CLASA a XII-a - SECȚIUNEA A

VARIANTA 1

NOTĂ: Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A - USE OF ENGLISH **40 points**

I. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and six words, including the word given. (5 X 2p = 10 p)

1. We never needed to show our train tickets during our journey.

REQUIRED

At no show our train tickets during our journey.

2. The delegates arrived late for the conference because of the traffic jam.

PREVENTED

The traffic jamtime for the conference.

3. "I don't want you driving at night," Ann told Jim.

RATHER

Ann told Jim that she at night.

4. Delia said she would no longer tolerate her colleagues being rude.

PUT

"I'm not willingfrom my colleagues any longer," said Delia.

5. Your mobile phone should be switched off at all times during the performance.

SHOULD

Under no your mobile phone switched on during the performance.

II. Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D. (10 X 1p = 10p)

Girls and technology

If you want your daughter to succeed, buy her a toy construction set. That is the advice from Britain's (1).....female engineers and scientists. Marie-Noelle Barton, who heads an Engineering Council campaign to encourage girls into science and engineering, maintains that some of Britain's most successful women have had their careers (2).....by the toys they played with as children. Even girls who end (3).....nowhere near a microchip or microscope could benefit from a better (4).....of science and technology. "It's a (5).....of giving them experience and confidence with technology so that when they are (6).....with a situation requiring some technical know-how, they feel they can handle it and don't just (7).....defeat immediately", says Mrs Barton. "I believe that lots of girls feel unsure of themselves when it comes (8).....technology and therefore they might be losing out on jobs because they are reluctant even to apply for them."

Research recently carried (9).....suggests that scientific and constructional toys should be (10)....to girls from an early age, otherwise the result is "socialisation" into stereotypically female roles, which may explain why relatively few girls study science and engineering at university in Britain.

| | | | | |
|----|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | A foremost | B uppermost | C predominant | D surpassing |
| 2 | A styled | B shaped | C built | D modelled |
| 3 | A in | B by | C on | D up |
| 4 | A hold | B grasp | C insight | D realisation |
| 5 | A matter | B situation | C state | D cause |
| 6 | A approached | B encountered | C presented | D offered |
| 7 | A admit | B allow | C receive | D permit |
| 8 | A for | B to | C from | D with |
| 9 | A off | B through | C forward | D out |
| 10 | A accessible | B feasible | C reachable | D obtainable |

III. Write one word in each gap. (10 X 1p = 10p)

People who are (1) extreme sports love the idea of a challenge. For some, it's escaping the monotony of everyday life and the planning is more important than the actual sport, for example organising the event in great detail, or raising money (2) charity. But adrenaline, too, plays a big part, with many saying they need a physical buzz that they can't (3)..... from normal life. (4) can be a misconception to believe these people are reckless; in fact, they are often the opposite of what we assume. They try their hardest not to leave things (5) chance and they don't do anything (6) they're ready. There's also a lot of creativity in the things extreme-sports people do. These sports often don't have established rules; the participants have to work them out (7) they go along. Crucial to this (8) a sense of trust in oneself and the environment, (9) something that is necessarily encouraged nowadays. After all, we're living in a time (10) health and safety rules are dominant.

IV. Write the correct form of the word in CAPITALS to complete the gaps: (10 X 1p = 10p)

Skiing is one of the most straightforward forms of exercise there is. It offers the participant, whether a novice or an old hand at the sport a great deal of excitement and (1)....., plus lots of fresh air. But skiing does have its various (2)..... . When it comes to guaranteeing a profitable day's downhill skiing, there are two essential ingredients. You need hills or (3).....mountains, in order to get the most out of this (4)..... ; then you need a fairly generous covering of snow. (5)..... , there are usually snow machines to supplement any natural (6)..... in the supply of this second (7)..... , and help may now be at hand too for those lacking in the first, through the sport of snow-kiting. Snow-kiting is a wintry offshoot of kite-surfing, an established watersport. By harnessing their skis to an inflated kite, snow-kiters can move at speed across even the very flattest of landscapes. All they need is a (8).....wind, then they can enjoy all the exhilaration of a fast downhill ski run. In fact, partly because of (9).....objects such as electricity pylons, the best location for snow-kiting is not a ski resort at all, but a vast (10).....plain. Skiing may never be the same again.

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----|-----------|
| 1 | PLEASE | 6 | DEFICIENT |
| 2 | ADVANTAGE | 7 | REQUIRE |
| 3 | PREFER | 8 | REASON |
| 4 | PURSUE | 9 | HAZARD |
| 5 | FORTUNE | 10 | INTERRUPT |

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow. (5 X 1p = 5p)

Critical Thinking

Critical, or analytical thinking is a way of interacting with what we read or listen to in attempt to have a deeper understanding. 'There is a belief that argument is a way of finding the truth,' observes Adrian West, research director at the Edward de Bono Foundation U.K

Although there's little debate that information technology complements - and often enhances - the human mind in the quest to store information and process an ever-growing tangle of bits and bytes, there's increasing concern that the same technology is changing the way we approach complex problems and making it more difficult to really think. 'We're exposed to greater amounts of poor yet charismatic thinking, the fads of intellectual fashion, opinion, and mere assertion,' says West. 'The wealth of communications and information can easily overwhelm our reasoning abilities.' What's more, it's ironic that ever-growing piles of data and information do not equate to greater knowledge and better decision-making. What's remarkable, West says, is just 'how little this has affected the quality of our thinking.'

According to the National Endowment for the Arts, literary reading, for one thing, declined 10 percentage points from 1982 to 2002, and the rate of decline is accelerating. Many, including Patricia Greenfield, a professor of psychology, believe that a greater focus on visual media comes at a price. 'A drop-off in reading has possibly contributed to a decline in critical thinking,' she says. 'There is a greater emphasis on real-time media and multi-tasking rather than focusing on a single thing.' Nevertheless, a definitive answer about how technology affects critical thinking is not yet available. Instead, due to the ever greater presence of technology, critical thinking has landed in a mushy swamp and academics can no longer rely on fundamental beliefs that they previously held.

While it's tempting to view computers, video games, and the internet in a largely good or bad way, the reality is that they may be both, with different technologies, systems and uses yielding entirely different results. For example, a video game may promote critical thinking or detract from it. Reading on the internet may ratchet up one's ability to analyze while chasing an endless array of hyperlinks may undercut deeper thought.

'Exposure to technology fundamentally changes the way people think', says Greenfield. As visual media have exploded, noticeable changes have resulted. 'Reading enhances thinking and engages the imagination in a way that visual media do not,' Greenfield explains. 'It develops imagination, induction, reflection, critical thinking, and vocabulary.' However, she has found that visual media actually improve some types of information processing. Unfortunately, 'most visual media are real-time and do not allow time for reflection, analysis, or imagination,' she says. The upshot? Many people - particularly those who are younger - wind up not making the most of their capabilities.

How society views technology has a great deal to do with how it forms perceptions about critical thinking. And nowhere is the conflict more apparent than at the intersection of video games and cognition. James Paul Gee, a professor of educational psychology, points out that things aren't always as they appear. 'There is a strong undercurrent of opinion that video games aren't healthy for kids,' he says. 'The reality is that they are not only a major form of entertainment, they often provide a very good tool for learning.' In fact, joysticks can go a long way toward building smarter children with better reasoning skills. Games extend beyond rote memorization, and teach decision-making and analytical skills in immersive, virtual environments that resemble the real world. Moreover, these games give participants freedom to explore ideas and concepts that might otherwise be inaccessible.

1. In the second paragraph, it is said that information technology

- A does not help us to manage large amounts of data.
- B does not enable us to make better judgements.
- C does not improve our ability to remember details.
- D does not allow us to find solutions to problems faster.

2. What does Patricia Greenfield say about the decline of literary reading?

- A It is the result of the popularity of the moving image.
- B It is unrelated to people's ability to multi-task.
- C It has led to an increased awareness of critical thinking.
- D It has been caused by the growing tendency to read online.

3. In the fourth paragraph, what point does the writer make about hyperlinks in internet texts?

- A They prevent the reader from considering other points of view.
- B They diminish the reader's experience of engaging with the material.
- C They offer the reader an opportunity to explore subjects in greater depth.
- D They make life easier for the reader by offering instant access to information.

4. Based on her research into learning and technology, Greenfield believes that visual media

- A might actually develop people's creativity in new ways.
- B have contributed significantly to linguistic change.
- C may prevent certain users from fulfilling their potential.
- D can detract from people's ability to relate to each other.

5. In the sixth paragraph, the writer reports the view that, for young people, playing video games

- A is a means of escape from the pressures of everyday life.
- B is a highly suitable medium for intellectual development.
- C teaches effective ways of solving conflict.
- D allows enjoyment of a safe form of entertainment.

II. Read the text again and write a compelling and thought-provoking article that explores the impact of technology on teenagers' creativity and critical thinking. Your article should blend informative content with engaging storytelling to capture the reader's interest. (250-280 words)

(45 p)

OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ, ETAPA LOCALĂ
28 FEBRUARIE 2026
CLASA a IX-a, SECȚIUNEA B

Varianta 1

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow.

20 points

Until relatively recent times, historians chose to record events that **had a bearing on** the development of their own society, or on the society they decided to study. As a result, many people treated political history as history itself.

Over the last century, historians expanded the scope of historical writing. They included constitutional, economic, local, and social history. Research standards also became more exact. Historians responded by creating fields and time periods that made research easier to manage. This **delineation** of topics helped historians organise evidence and compare sources. It also pushed them to narrow their focus.

In theory, history covers the whole range of past human actions. In practice, historians select a subject and impose a chronological framework. These choices lead many historians to reject large areas of human activity. They do this when sources remain limited, or when the topic offers little benefit for serious research. One professor summed up this view by saying that darkness is not a subject for history. Voltaire made a similar point when he asked what benefit the public gains from learning that one barbarian replaced another in the same remote place.

This focus has also tended to make historians Eurocentric. Europe has strongly affected the rest of the world over the last five centuries, through politics, trade, and culture. Historians therefore often treat European development as a key reference point. Societies that left no written record often fall under prehistory, or they become the province of the anthropologist.

The civilisations of Egypt and Mesopotamia can be studied more or less in isolation because they developed early written systems and state structures in their own regions, and historians can analyse them mainly through their internal records. Greece and Rome, in contrast, had a more direct bearing on later Europe, so historians link them more closely to European history. The question is whether this delineation of history limits connections between periods, thus **hindering** historians in their attempts to shed light on our own times.

A. Answer the following questions.

8 points

1. What has influenced most historical writers' choice of subject?
2. According to the text, what factors contributed to the rejection of large areas of human activity by historians?
3. Why have historians tended to become Eurocentric?
4. What kind of evidence allows historians to reconstruct Egypt and Mesopotamia without depending mainly on later European links?

B. Choose the right synonym.

6 points

1. **had a bearing on** a. impacted b. were tangential to c. were preceded by d. were identical to
2. **delineation** a. classification b. chronology c. delimitation d. framework
3. **hindering** a. encouraging b. enabling c. impeding d. prompting

C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning:

6 points

1. Historians ought to broaden their focus beyond a Eurocentric view, or they will fail to draw links between periods.
Historians had.....in drawing links between periods.

2. It is believed that historians were more preoccupied with studying civilisations which had more influence on European society.
Historians..... with studying civilisations which had more influence on European society.

3. Historians regret having ignored societies which left no written record.
Historians wish.....no written record.

II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each gap.

10 points

Wind farms are an (1. **INCREASE**) common sight around the world. Onshore wind farms are built in areas which are (2. **SPECIAL**) windy, such as hillsides. They represent one of the most effective ways of producing (3. **RENEW**) energy. 75 percent less expensive than solar power, and even slightly cheaper than nuclear power, onshore wind is also a winner as far as cost (4. **EFFICIENT**) is

concerned. There are, however, problems associated with wind farms. One of them is the notorious (5. **RELY**) of their source of energy - the wind - which does not always blow. (6. **ADD**), they can have a negative impact on the surrounding countryside, and sometimes produce noise. This has led to protests by local (7. **RESIDE**). One way of avoiding these problems is to build the wind farms offshore - in the middle of the sea - where the wind blows more constantly. The countryside is left completely (8. **SPOIL**), and there's nobody to complain. The trouble is, building huge wind farms miles out at sea is (9. **SURPRISE**) expensive, and once built, repair and (10. **MAINTAIN**) is also costly.

III. Read the text below and think of the word which best fits in each gap. Use only one word in each gap.

10 points

About a century ago, the English science-fiction writer H.G. Wells said, 'When I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair of the human race'. In the years since the Industrial Revolution, the world has seen an explosion of technical inventiveness, but none has had (1)_____ an exclusively positive effect as the bicycle. Nearly every modern invention has its downside (2)_____ from the bicycle. The car pollutes our cities, the TV spreads fake news, the computer shortens our attention span, etc. But, (3)_____ or not you are a cyclist yourself, it is difficult to come up with a single drawback of this 18th-century invention. As far as energy consumption is concerned, it is a more efficient method of travel than walking. Needless to (4)_____, the car is way behind in this respect. A litre of petrol will drive you about 16 km, whereas if you use the energy equivalent of that litre to pedal a bicycle, you will travel over 1,000 km, as (5)_____ as you are fit enough!

SUBJECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

Hungry pop stars

Valerie Jones runs a company called Peanuts whose job is to look after pop stars and pop groups when they go on tour. She is the person who feeds the stars and she's been doing it for the past ten years.

When the stars are playing at a festival Valerie may have to cook for up to a thousand people which includes all the crew and the people who work backstage. She erects a marquee – a huge tent – and the food is served buffet style from a central serving area. She has to cater for different tastes, so there are normally four or more choices of menu. She also has to look after people who may be on a special diet or some singers who don't eat dairy food before a concert.

She drives an enormous truck full of kitchen equipment and hires at least three walk-in refrigerators, a dishwashing unit and portable cabins which act as storerooms and office.

All the bands have to queue up to be served and everyone has to have a meal ticket. The stars are usually more relaxed when they are eating as no one is bothering them for autographs, although Valerie says that sometimes the security men and the stars' managers are more trouble than the stars themselves.

There are certain things which she always has to keep in stock like herbal teas and her own particular mixture of honey, lemon and ginger which singers like to keep in flasks on stage with them when they're singing. Years ago, bands used to drink quite a lot of alcohol, but these days they're much healthier. Most bands drink fresh fruit juice and prefer to eat salads.

A lot of people in the bands are quite young and they're not used to very expensive food, so Valerie prepares plain food unless a band sends her a 'rider'. This is a list of special requirements. When people are tired, unwell or homesick they like to have familiar 'comfort' food, so she keeps a stock of people's requirements just in case. As a result of all this, Valerie says she has become an expert shopper and in less than an hour in a supermarket she can spend £1000.

I. For each question choose the correct letter A, B, C or D.

(5x1p= 5p)

1. Valerie has to provide a range of food because

- A people are very fussy about what they eat.
- B people are used to eating in restaurants.
- C there is such a wide variety of preferences.
- D there is such a demand for special menus.

2. The singers are less nervous when they are eating because

- A their security men are with them.
- B there are no fans hanging around.
- C their managers fuss over them.
- D the bands enjoy eating together.

3. Why does Valerie have to keep a supply of certain drinks?

- A The bands rely on a special recipe.
- B The bands prefer herbal tea to coffee.
- C The bands take fruit juice on stage.
- D The bands like to drink alcohol.

4. What do most bands like best to eat?

- A rich food
- B cheap food
- C junk food
- D simple food

5. Why do you think Valerie has become an 'expert shopper'?

- A She has a lot of money to spend each week.
- B She has learnt to find what individuals want.
- C She has to buy as much as possible for £1000.
- D She has to shop very quickly in a supermarket.

II. A travel website is creating a new section to promote exciting local festivals to international tourists. They are looking for engaging reviews that describe the atmosphere, cultural significance, and tourist appeal of such events. You have been asked to write a review (200–220 words) of a regional festival in your country. **(45 points)**

OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ, ETAPA LOCALĂ

28 FEBRUARIE, 2026

CLASA a X-a, SECȚIUNEA B

Varianta 1

Notă: Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow.

When the first social media platforms emerged in the early 2000s, they were **heralded** as the ultimate tools for democratic liberation. We believed that by connecting the world, we would inevitably foster greater understanding and empathy. However, the initial **euphoria** has largely been eclipsed by a more cynical reality. Rather than a global village, the digital landscape has often felt more like a fragmented battlefield. The overriding sentiment among early adopters wasn't one of caution, but a naive "the more, the merrier" approach to digital connections. We didn't realise that these platforms were designed not just for connection, but for extraction—monetising our attention through carefully calibrated algorithms.

By the 2010s, the smartphone had become an anatomical extension of the human body. It was no longer a tool we used, but an environment we inhabited. I stayed away from the most intrusive apps for years, dismissing them as the preserve of the narcissistic or the bored. I sneered at the idea that I could ever be manipulated by a simple notification. Yet, I eventually succumbed when I realised that being "off-grid" was starting to look like a professional **liability**. I told myself it was for networking, but soon I found myself scrolling mindlessly at three in the morning, seeking a dopamine hit from strangers' approval.

The turning point came when I realised I had lost the capacity for "deep work." My attention span had been shredded into thousand-piece fragments. I grew to resent the device that sat like a silent taskmaster on my desk. I began to understand that true freedom in the modern age isn't the ability to stay connected, but the power to disconnect without anxiety. Without a conscious effort to reclaim our mental space, the technology that was supposed to empower us will continue to diminish us. We are currently on standby for a world that doesn't actually need us to be there 24/7.

A. Answer the following questions. (8 points)

1. According to the writer, how has the perception of social media changed since its inception?
2. What was the writer's original attitude toward people who used intrusive apps?
3. Why did the writer eventually feel forced to join these digital platforms?
4. What does the writer identify as the "turning point" in their relationship with technology?

B. Choose the right synonym. (6 points)

1. **heralded**: a. ignored b. criticised c. acclaimed d. delayed
2. **euphoria**: a. elation b. boredom c. suspicion d. clarity
3. **liability**: a. asset b. disadvantage c. requirement d. achievement

C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. (6 points)

1. We didn't realise that these platforms were designed for extraction.
Little..... that these platforms were designed for extraction.
2. Without a conscious effort to reclaim our mental space, the technology will continue to diminish us.
The technology if we were to make a conscious effort to reclaim our mental space.
3. These platforms are monetising our attention through carefully calibrated algorithms.

Through carefully calibrated algorithms, by these platforms.

II. Use the word given in capitals to form a word that fits in each gap. (10 points)

The (1)..... **AVAILABLE** of renewable energy sources has become a global priority. While many countries have made (2)..... **CONSIDER** progress in wind and solar power, there is still a high level of (3)..... **DEPEND** on fossil fuels. Experts argue that our current (4)..... **CONSUME** patterns are simply (5)..... **SUSTAIN** in the long term.

To combat this, (6)..... **INVENT** are looking for ways to improve the (7)..... **EFFICIENT** of electric car batteries. One of the main (8)..... **ADVANTAGE** for many people is the (9)..... **SCARCE** of charging stations in rural areas. However, with (10)..... **SUBSTANCE** investment, we may see a revolution in how we power our lives.

III. Read the text below and think of the word which best fits in each gap. Use only one word in each gap. (10 points)

The city of Venice is famous (1)..... its beautiful canals and historic architecture. However, the city is currently facing a serious threat from rising sea levels. (2)..... to scientists, Venice could be underwater by the end of the century if nothing is done to stop the flooding. In an effort to save the city, engineers have designed a massive barrier system (3)..... is intended to hold back the tide. (4)..... the high cost of the project, many residents believe it is the only way to protect their homes. Only time will tell (5)..... the barriers will be enough to preserve the city for future generations.

SUBJECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

THE SILENT ARCHITECTS OF FLAVOUR

The culinary world is often described as a creative sanctuary, where chefs follow their instincts to craft dishes that reflect local heritage and personal flair. Or so the myth suggests. While this artisanal approach may have defined kitchens in the past, much of the modern food industry is now governed by precise chemical formulas and logistical efficiency. The nutritional needs of consumers are still listed on every package, but processed foods are primarily engineered with a singular objective in mind—shelf-life. The result of this is that the dominant influences in food production are those of food scientists and marketing executives, for whom a product functions according to its ability to remain stable during long-distance shipping. Younger culinary students, however, are often dismissed as idealistic when they challenge these industrial standards.

The Gastronomy Collective, a research institute, is seeking to overhaul this system. Its director, Dr. Aris Thorne, argues that the future of food must prioritise "sensory biodiversity" rather than just caloric output. "My family moved between rural farming communities and massive industrial cities when I was a child," he explains. He recalls that whenever he tasted a mass-produced version of a local fruit years later, he was frustrated by how industrial farming failed to preserve the complex flavour profiles of the original. For example, there was an increased focus on the durability of the fruit's skin to prevent bruising during transport, but whom does this really benefit? Generally, these traits serve the retailers and distributors, neither of whom prioritise the actual taste experience of the person eating it.

Thorne was determined to integrate traditional farming wisdom into modern food technology. Initially, he found inspiration in *Seed Savers*, a global network that allows amateur gardeners to document and trade rare plant species via a digital database. He noticed the way in which teenagers were able to cultivate, categorise, and cross-breed forgotten varieties of vegetables in their own backyards, visualising a more colourful food future without being deterred by the high costs of commercial farming. This is in sharp contrast to the way in which industrial agriculturists operate—bound by patent laws, monoculture requirements, and predicted profit margins.

Once Thorne began interviewing young agricultural students, he realised how revolutionary their perspectives could be. He asked them what flaws they saw in the current food system and what innovations they would propose. There were some common requests, such as increasing the availability of vertical indoor farms. But they also raised some sophisticated points that even he had overlooked. For instance, many companies have spent millions developing meat alternatives, but the goal is often to mimic the exact texture of beef to appease traditional meat-eaters—and here lies the flaw. As his interviewees explained, this often leads to a reliance on highly processed binders and additives, which, in their view, defeats the purpose of moving toward a more natural, plant-based diet.

Thorne also noted that the young researchers he spoke to prioritised the restoration of "soil health" over chemical fertilisation. Sometimes, they would provide him with intricate plans for "closed-loop" farms where waste is recycled into energy. At other times, their suggestions

were based on the work of Maria-Helena Semedo, the leading advocate for sustainable soil management whose research many of the students had utilised in their university projects. After Thorne conducted his own investigation into Semedo's findings, he was completely persuaded that the students' focus on the "ground-up" health of the planet was the only viable path forward.

The "industrial" approach to food occurs when corporate boards dictate the global diet, whereas the "regenerative" approach requires the active participation of local producers. There is a strong argument that, as Thorne puts it, "you have to get your hands dirty, understand the biology of the land, and force the giants of the industry to listen." While it would be unwise to ignore the logistical capabilities of large corporations, this type of grassroots passion is an equally essential tool. He is now presenting his data to international food summits, hoping to convince them that his findings are the most critical factor in the long-term physical health of the global population.

I. For each question choose the correct letter A, B, C or D (5 x 1p= 5p)

1. How did Thorne feel when tasting mass-produced food from his childhood?

- A. impressed by the consistency of the flavours across different regions.
- B. annoyed that the physical durability of the food was prioritised over its taste.
- C. worried that the fruit was becoming too expensive for local families.
- D. confused by the new technology used to grow the produce.

2. In the third paragraph, what is Thorne's main observation about the young gardeners?

- A. their ability to use digital databases to track commercial profits.
- B. their talent for following complex patent laws in agriculture.
- C. their imaginative and unrestricted approach to plant cultivation.
- D. their preference for traditional farming over modern technology.

3. In the fourth paragraph, the writer suggests that Thorne

- A. believes meat alternatives are the only solution to the food crisis.
- B. was surprised by the young students' critique of processed ingredients.
- C. thought the students were focused too much on the texture of food.
- D. felt that large companies were spending their money effectively.

4. In the fifth paragraph, the writer shows that Thorne felt

- A. validated in his beliefs after researching the work of an expert.
- B. disappointed that the students relied so heavily on university projects.
- C. concerned about the high costs of building closed-loop farms.
- D. inspired to teach the students more about chemical fertilisation.

5. The writer makes the point that the future of food should

- A. be managed exclusively by the corporate boards of large companies.
- B. combine the logistical power of corporations with grassroots insights.
- C. ignore the technical expertise of traditional food scientists.
- D. focus primarily on the speed of international shipping.

II. Starting from the text above, write a report on the following topic:

You are a member of the school's **Green Club**. Following several complaints from students, you have been asked by the Headmaster to write a **report** on the quality of food in the school cafeteria and its effects on the student body.

Your report should address the following points:

- The current state of the food served.
- The impact of these dietary options on students' physical health and concentration.
- Recommendations for involving local producers and improving meal quality.

Write your report in 200-220 words in an appropriate style. (45 points)

Varianta 1

Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)**I. Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow.****The Macabre Mile**

Morbid curiosity, it turns out, is a growth industry. I am standing on a rain-slicked pavement in East London, part of a small, ghoulishly enthusiastic group about to embark on 'The Macabre Mile Walking Tour'. Our guide, Brenda, a woman whose cheerful demeanour is profoundly at odds with the subject matter, beams at us. "Right then, lovelies," she chirps, "first stop on our little tour of terror!" My initial cynicism, already well-developed, hardens into a solid block of intellectual **disdain**. These are not historians. These are connoisseurs of catastrophe.

Our group is a curious cross-section of humanity. There is a young couple, clearly on a date, whose choice of romantic activity raises a series of alarming questions. There is a quiet, intense man who nods knowingly at Brenda's every word. And there is Kevin, a self-proclaimed "Ripperologist," who occasionally corrects Brenda on minor forensic details with an air of professional superiority. He is, he informs me without invitation, particularly interested in the killer's "geographical profiling." I just nod and scribble in my notepad, feigning journalistic interest.

We proceed from one nondescript street corner to another, each one the site of some historical horror. Brenda recounts the grim details with the practised cadence of a seasoned performer. The group listens, captivated. At first, I see only the voyeurism, the **ghoulish** thrill of standing where something terrible happened. It feels cheap, a commercialisation of tragedy. But as the tour progresses, I begin to sense a deeper, more complex motivation at play. These people are not just seeking thrills. They are seeking a narrative.

Kevin, the expert, explains it to me during a short break. "It's about ordering the chaos," he says, his eyes alight with passion.

"When you study the case, the patterns, the mistakes... you put the monster in a box. You understand it. It's not just random horror anymore. It's a story with a beginning, a middle, and, well, usually a mystery."

His words linger in my mind. Perhaps this pilgrimage to the sites of past horrors is not about celebrating the monster, but about containing it. It is a way to look into the abyss from a safe distance, to experience a contained version of terror that offers a strange form of **catharsis**. My intellectual disdain begins to soften, replaced by a reluctant curiosity. The line between my journalistic observation and their peculiar hobby feels suddenly, uncomfortably thin.

As we disperse into the encroaching dusk, my earlier cynicism feels naive, a simplistic judgement of a complex human impulse. I still find the enterprise bizarre, unsettling. But I can no longer dismiss it so easily.

A. Answer the following questions. 8 points

1. What seems to be surprising about Brenda, the guide?
2. How does Kevin manifest his alleged superiority towards Brenda?
3. According to Kevin, what is the main purpose of this kind of tours?
4. In what way does the author's perspective on the "dark tourists" change?

B. Choose the right synonym. 6 points

1. **disdain** A. selfishness B. attitude C. contempt D. capacity
2. **ghoulish** A. enormous B. mysterious C. incomprehensible D. morbid
3. **catharsis** A. liberation B. excitement C. celebration D. grief

C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. 6 points

1. But as the tour progresses, I begin to sense a deeper, more complex motivation at play.
As we proceed....., I begin to sense a deeper, more complex motivation at play.
2. When you study the case, the patterns, the mistakes, you put the monster in a box.
If you didn't study the case, the patterns, the mistakes, the monster in a box.
3. But I can no longer dismiss the enterprise so easily.
No longer..... the enterprise so easily.

II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each gap. 10 points

Power Naps

Power napping is an effective strategy. It involves taking an intense sleep which dramatically improves (1) ___ (**ALERT**), making it especially useful for those with a (2) ___ (**DEMAND**) schedule such as mothers of babies or travelling business (3) ___ (**EXECUTE**). However, the conditions must be right and practice is required in order to (4) ___ (**MAXIMUM**) the effects. To prevent (5) ___ (**ORIENTATE**) on awakening, power naps should last (6) ___ (**APPROXIMATE**) 25 minutes. Falling asleep so quickly takes practice, but is in fact a habit relatively easy to acquire. Initially, it is more important to relax for a while than actually fall asleep, and power-napping is not a good idea if you find it difficult to wake up at the (7) ___ (**DESIGNATE**) time. Finally, power-napping should not be confused with the kind of dozing that can (8) ___ (**COMPANY**) a sensation of overwhelming (9) ___ (**SLEEP**) during the day, which simply represents the (10) ___ (**DESPERATE**) experienced in the attempt to compensate for a poor sleep routine.

III. Read the text below and think of the word which best fits in each gap. Use only one word in each gap. 10 points

Retail therapy

For many people, 'retail therapy' offers the ultimate salvation (1)___ the stress of modern living. But a major new study now suggests that for millions of people, binge shopping is (2)___ longer an emotional cure-all. (3)___ anything, it may make you feel worse. 'For significant numbers, dissatisfaction is now part of the shopping process; said Lucy Purdy of analysts Publicis, that carried (4)___ the nationwide study. 'Shopping offers a short-term buzz, and, (5)___ a society, we now recognise this and we're getting fed (6)___ with short-term emotions.' The Publicis researchers said retailers should tailor their marketing (7)___ carefully, so that shoppers don't feel that they are being tricked (8)___ making unnecessary purchases. The psychologist Oliver James said: 'We're now seeing a generation which has been brought up to believe that the pursuit of status and wealth is the route to fulfilment, which has (9)___ out to be manifestly not true. In fact, (10)___ rich you are has no bearing whatsoever on your mental health or well-being.'

SUBJECTUL B - INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

I. For each question decide which answer (A, B, C or D) fits best according to the text. 5 points

Digital Nomadism and the New Colonialism

Social media portrays digital nomadism as liberation: professionals conducting video calls from Bangkok cafes, launching ventures beside Guatemalan volcanoes, coding applications whilst exploring Moroccan bazaars. This lifestyle has captivated the remote work generation, promising professional success without geographical constraints. Yet beneath this aspirational narrative lurks a troubling reality, contemporary patterns of exploitation disguised as progressive global citizenship.

Conservative estimates indicate over 50 million digital nomads worldwide, predominantly Western professionals earning salaries calibrated to expensive home markets whilst residing where purchasing power increases dramatically. A developer earning \$70,000 annually can live luxuriously in Prague or Porto, accessing amenities unaffordable in London or New York. This economic arbitrage forms nomadism's foundation.

Such disparities create severe local distortions. Popular destinations like Lisbon, Mexico City, and Medellin experience rapid gentrification as high-earning foreigners inflate housing markets. Long-term residents face displacement from ancestral neighbourhoods as landlords prioritise short-term rentals commanding premium rates from nomads. Professionals fleeing expensive home cities due to tech-driven gentrification now trigger identical displacement patterns in adopted temporary homes.

Cultural isolation compounds economic disruption. Nomads typically cluster in specific areas, creating parallel societies with minimal local engagement. They patronise co-working spaces mimicking Silicon Valley aesthetics, frequent restaurants serving international cuisine, and socialise predominantly with fellow nomads. This self-segregation exemplifies 'extractive mobility', exploiting favourable economic conditions whilst contributing minimally beyond inflating living costs.

Language barriers intensify this separation. Unlike traditional expatriates making long-term commitments, nomads' transitory presence discourages language acquisition. Many destinations develop dual economies: local-language markets serving residents, English-speaking sectors catering to foreigners. This linguistic segregation reinforces economic inequality, enabling nomad-serving businesses to charge premium prices whilst local establishments struggle competitively.

Visa regimes enabling nomadism expose structural inequalities. Wealthy-nation citizens enjoy unprecedented mobility, with countries competing to attract high-earning remote workers through specialised programmes. Conversely, residents of nomad destinations face increasingly restrictive travel barriers. Mexican entrepreneurs cannot easily establish Berlin businesses, nor Colombian developers casually relocate to Amsterdam. This asymmetrical mobility perpetuates global hierarchies privileging Western passports whilst constraining Global South movement.

Housing market impacts prove particularly damaging. In Lisbon, nomad demand combined with investment visa programmes renders

homeownership impossible for young Portuguese. Similar patterns emerge across popular destinations: stagnant local wages amid soaring accommodation costs calibrated to foreign purchasing power. This creates economic colonialism where locals become service providers in their own cities, unable to afford lifestyles their labour enables for visitors.

Environmental consequences are equally problematic. Nomadism generates enormous carbon footprints through constant flights, temporary accommodations, and mobility-optimised consumption patterns. Typical nomad emissions exceed settled individuals' by 300-400% annually. Climate impacts fall disproportionately on Global South destinations that historically contributed least to emissions yet bear nomadism's environmental costs.

Some advocates claim nomad spending benefits local economies through job creation and foreign currency. However, research indicates uneven distribution. Platform operators and property hosts profit whilst broader communities see minimal trickle-down effects. Nomad expenditure typically flows to international platforms rather than locally owned enterprises.

Digital nomadism represents economic rather than political colonialism, enabling privileged individuals to extract value from global inequalities whilst avoiding citizenship responsibilities or long-term commitments. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily exposed this privilege when border closures and evacuation flights revealed nomads' dependence on Western passport power. Yet post-pandemic nomadism has intensified, suggesting structural inequalities remain unexamined by practitioners who mistake mobility for liberation whilst perpetuating exploitation through lifestyle choices.

1. What does the author argue about the popular social media portrayal of digital nomadism?

- A. It is a realistic depiction of a lifestyle that is accessible to everyone.
- B. It accurately reflects the lifestyle's benefits for both nomads and host countries.
- C. It overemphasises the professional challenges while ignoring the personal freedoms.
- D. It romanticises a lifestyle whose negative consequences are largely ignored.

2. The concept of 'extractive mobility' describes nomads who:

- A. remove physical resources and cultural artefacts from destination countries
- B. deliberately avoid paying local taxes whilst benefiting from public infrastructure and services
- C. operate within a social bubble, making little effort at local integration
- D. physically relocate local businesses to serve international markets

3. According to the text, nomadism's visa regimes demonstrate:

- A. equal global mobility opportunities regardless of passport nationality
- B. an imbalanced system of global access that benefits citizens of wealthier nations
- C. temporary employment solutions for developing- nation unemployment
- D. necessary security measures protecting destination countries from exploitation

4. The author characterises digital nomadism as economic colonialism because it:

- A. allows for the enjoyment of a host country's benefits without reciprocal contribution
- B. involves political control over local government institutions
- C. requires military presence to maintain nomad community security
- D. systematically suppresses local languages and cultural traditions

5. The author's perspective on digital nomadism can best be described as:

- A. cautiously optimistic about its potential for cross-cultural understanding
- B. critically concerned about exploitative structural dynamics disguised as liberation
- C. enthusiastically supportive of its contributions to global economic development
- D. neutrally analytical, weighing both positive and negative consequences equally

- II. You have just read the text above and this announcement in a magazine: "In our fast-changing, highly technological global world, digital nomadism has become a trend. We invite you, our enthusiastic readers, to explore the impact of having more and more people working remotely, frequently relocating to different countries. Write an article that examines the concept of Digital Nomads, considering the following key elements: the cultural and psychological impact, the economic implications, and whether this lifestyle is as idyllic as it seems or it holds darker aspects. We will publish the best articles in our next issue".

Write your article (220 - 250 words).

45 points

INSPECTORATUL ȘCOLAR JUDEȚEAN PRAHOVA
OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ, ETAPA LOCALĂ
2026
CLASA a XII-a, SECȚIUNEA B
VARIANTA 1

• Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A - USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

What is cloaked in hues of ebony and ivory, universally adored, yet may command an annual outlay nearing three million dollars for a zoological garden? He boasts rotund cheeks. He indulges in frequent siestas. He partakes of nourishment with his hands. He abides with his maternal figure. This entity is not the conventional figure one might envisage within the spheres of lofty finance, international diplomacy, fervent adulation, governmental oversight, and scholarly curiosity. Yet, Tai Shan stands out as a juvenile giant panda, setting him apart from the ordinary bear.

Zoos face an average annual expenditure of 2.6 million dollars to accommodate giant pandas, a figure that excludes any **ancillary** costs associated with the advent of panda offspring. Incorporate a cub, and the budget escalates beyond three million dollars. With the introduction of two offspring (given that nearly 50% of panda births yield twins), the aggregate cost soars close to four million dollars. "No other species," avows David Wildt, the director of the National Zoo's Reproductive Studies Program, "commands such a significant fiscal commitment."

What renders pandas so singularly captivating? It might well be an irresistible onslaught of charm. Giant pandas radiate an allure sought by politicians and film luminaries alike—and for which individuals pine, craving just a glimpse. The National Zoo's online panda cameras, chronicling the day-to-day antics of Tai Shan and his dam, enthrall an average of two million digital visitors each month. During the premiere three months of Tai Shan's public unveiling, the influx of zoo visitors surged by up to 50 percent relative to preceding years. Throngs of fervent aficionados cluster tightly along the barriers at the Giant Panda Habitat. Index fingers point, exclamations of wonder resound, faces warp into visages of unadulterated delight.

Scarcity further amplifies the allure of these bears. Giant pandas are exceedingly rare. Not merely in their natural habitats but also in captivity, they are outnumbered by other renowned endangered species such as tigers, gorillas, black rhinos, and Asian elephants, in population size. Researchers estimate that only 1,590 giant pandas survive across the formidable landscapes of Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Gansu Provinces in China. The precision of such a definitive tally is questionable, especially for a species **elusive** by nature and residing in remote, often unapproachable mountainous woodlands. As of the close of 2005, the worldwide census of pandas in captivity stood at a mere 188 individuals, including 11 in the United States, with others dispersed through Mexico, Japan, Thailand, Germany, Austria, and the majority **ensconced** in zoos and research facilities within their native China.

A. Answer the following questions: (4 x 2p = 8 points)

1. Why does the writer suggest that Tai Shan is an unconventional figure in the spheres mentioned in the first paragraph?
2. What does David Wildt's statement reveal about the status of giant pandas in zoos?
3. What factor, besides their charm, does the writer identify as contributing to pandas' popularity?
4. In what way does the writer question the accuracy of the panda census figures?

B. Choose the right synonym: (3 x 2p = 6 points)

1. ancillary: a) marginal b) auxiliary c) subordinate d) trivial
2. elusive: a) remote b) obscure c) rare d) evasive
3. ensconced: a) entrenched b) hidden c) settled d) sheltered

C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. (3 x 2p = 6 points)

1. Researchers estimate that only 1,590 giant pandas survive in China.

Only 1,590 giant pandas _____ in China.

2. Giant pandas are exceedingly rare, which is why they captivate so many people.

Were _____ so many people.

3. Tai Shan was unveiled to the public and zoo attendance immediately surged by 50 percent.

At no time prior to Tai Shan's public unveiling _____.

II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each gap. (10 x 1p = 10 points)

Recent advances in animal cognition research have challenged long-held assumptions about the (1) (**INTELLECT**) capabilities of non-human species. Scientists studying great apes have documented their remarkable (2) (**ADAPT**) to changing environmental conditions, demonstrating problem-solving skills once thought to be uniquely human. The (3) (**CAPTIVE**) of wild animals in zoos, however, raises ethical concerns about their psychological well-being. Critics argue that even the most (4) (**SPACE**) enclosures cannot replicate the complexity of natural habitats. Wildlife conservationists point to the (5) (**DIVERSE**) of species facing extinction as evidence of humanity's destructive impact. The (6) (**SURVIVE**) of endangered animals depends increasingly on breeding programs, though some biologists warn of the dangers of (7) (**BREED**) in small populations. Field researchers have observed that certain species display (8) (**PREDICT**) behavioral patterns when confronted with human activity, making conservation efforts more challenging. The (9) (**RESPOND**) of governments to wildlife protection initiatives has been disappointingly slow. Without immediate action to address habitat (10) (**FRAGMENT**), many iconic species will vanish within our lifetime.

III. Read the text below and think of the word which best fits in each gap. Use only one word in each gap. (5 x 2p = 10 points)

The phenomenon of "doomscrolling" – the compulsive consumption of negative news online – has become increasingly prevalent in recent years. Mental health experts warn that this habit can significantly (1) _____ down an individual's psychological resilience and overall well-being. Many people find themselves scrolling through social media feeds late at night, absorbing distressing content to the (2) _____ of their sleep and mental health. (3) _____, breaking this cycle proves remarkably difficult, as algorithms are deliberately designed to capture and sustain user attention. Studies indicate that individuals who regularly engage in doomscrolling (4) _____ to experience elevated levels of anxiety and depression compared to those who consciously restrict their news consumption. No sooner had people become aware of this behavioural pattern (5) _____ its negative effects on mood and productivity began to surface.

SUBJECTUL B - INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

YOUTH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: REDEFINING COMMUNITY IMPACT

In an era marked by unprecedented social and environmental challenges, a new generation of young entrepreneurs is emerging with a distinctly different approach to business. Unlike their predecessors who prioritized profit maximization, these social entrepreneurs blend commercial acumen with a commitment to addressing pressing societal issues. From combating food insecurity to bridging educational divides, young innovators are demonstrating that purpose and profit need not be mutually exclusive.

Maya Rodriguez, a 22-year-old graduate from Barcelona, exemplifies this trend. Disturbed by the staggering amount of edible food discarded by supermarkets while thousands in her city struggled with hunger, she founded "Harvest Link" in 2022. The initiative connects grocery stores and restaurants with local food banks through a user-friendly app that facilitates real-time food donations. What began as a modest operation with three participating stores has expanded to encompass over 150 businesses across Catalonia, redistributing more than 200 tons of food annually. Rodriguez attributes her success to understanding that

businesses appreciate streamlined solutions that simultaneously reduce waste disposal costs and enhance their corporate social responsibility profiles. "The key," she explains, "is making social impact as convenient as possible for all stakeholders."

Equally compelling is the story of James Chen, who launched "Code Bridge" from his university dormitory in Manchester. Having witnessed his grandparents' frustration with increasingly digital services during the pandemic, Chen recognized a critical gap: while younger generations navigate technology effortlessly, many older adults feel increasingly marginalized by digital transformation. His solution pairs tech-savvy students with elderly community members for one-on-one digital literacy sessions. The intergenerational exchange has yielded unexpected benefits beyond improved technological competence. Participants report decreased feelings of isolation and anxiety, while student volunteers develop patience, communication skills, and a deeper appreciation for different perspectives. The program has since been replicated in twelve cities across the UK, engaging over 3,000 volunteers and assisting more than 8,000 older adults.

However, launching social enterprises presents distinctive challenges that traditional business models rarely encounter. Young entrepreneurs must navigate complex stakeholder relationships, balancing the expectations of beneficiaries, investors, and community partners. Financial sustainability remains precarious, particularly in the early stages when social impact metrics are still being established. Both Rodriguez and Chen candidly discuss periods of self-doubt when their ventures seemed financially unviable. "There were months when I questioned whether I should just get a conventional job," Chen admits. "But the testimonials from participants kept me going." Access to mentorship and seed funding specifically tailored to social enterprises has proven crucial for weathering these difficult phases.

Despite these obstacles, the proliferation of youth-led social enterprises signals a fundamental shift in how young people conceptualize their role in society. They reject the notion that one must choose between financial security and meaningful contribution, instead crafting innovative models that deliver both. As Maya Rodriguez articulates, "Our generation refuses to accept that making a living and making a difference are incompatible goals." This mindset, combined with digital fluency and global connectivity, positions young social entrepreneurs as catalysts for sustainable community transformation. Educational institutions and policymakers would be wise to nurture this burgeoning movement, for it may well represent the future of both business and social progress.

For each question, choose the correct letter A, B, C or D. (5 x 1p = 5 points)

1. What is the main purpose of the first paragraph?
 - A. To criticize traditional business approaches
 - B. To introduce a new trend in youth entrepreneurship
 - C. To compare different generations of entrepreneurs
 - D. To explain why social problems have increased
2. According to the text, what was key to Maya Rodriguez's success?
 - A. Her ability to secure significant funding
 - B. Making participation beneficial and easy for businesses
 - C. Her background in food distribution
 - D. The size of her initial operation
3. What does the writer suggest about James Chen's "Code Bridge" program?
 - A. It has achieved its primary objective but little else
 - B. It was initially designed to address multiple issues
 - C. It has produced valuable outcomes beyond its original goal
 - D. It requires participants to have specific technical skills
4. The writer mentions "periods of self-doubt" to illustrate that:
 - A. social entrepreneurs often lack business experience
 - B. maintaining social enterprises is financially challenging

- C. young people are unprepared for entrepreneurship
- D. conventional jobs are more secure than social ventures

5. In the final paragraph, the writer implies that:

- A. youth social entrepreneurship is a temporary trend
- B. educational institutions should focus more on traditional business
- C. this movement deserves support and recognition
- D. policymakers are already doing enough to help

II. WRITING - PROPOSAL (45 points)

Starting from the text above which emphasizes youth social entrepreneurship and community impact, write a proposal on the following topic:

You would like to establish a Social Entrepreneurship Club at your school to help students develop and launch their own community-focused projects. Write a proposal to the school principal requesting approval, resources, and support.

Your proposal should include:

- An introduction explaining the purpose and benefits of the club
- A description of the types of projects students could undertake
- Details about the structure and organization of the club (meetings, mentorship, activities)
- Specific resources and support needed from the school (financial, logistical, promotional)
- Expected outcomes and impact on students and the local community

Write your proposal in 250-280 words in an appropriate style.